

Nixon and Senators at Odds on Laos Transcript

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President Nixon was reported today to have refused to authorize the release of anything more than a heavily censored version of a Senate subcommittee's transcript of Administration testimony on the extent of United States involvement in Laos.

Sources in the Administration and in Congress made known the President's decision and said it was in keeping with earlier statements that the United States was bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos but that further public discussion on Laos would not be in the public interest.

The sources said that Senator Stuart W. Symington of Missouri, the subcommittee's chairman, had refused to issue such a watered down transcript because he felt it would mislead the public on what the United States is doing in Laos. Thus, after three months of negotiation between the subcommittee and the Administration, the issue is reported deadlocked with no sign that it will be resolved in the near future.

The sources said the Administration did not want to release the transcript because it would reveal that the United States had broken the Geneva Accords of 1962, which set Laotian neutrality and prohibited outside powers from sending armed forces into Laos.

The Administration was also said to fear that publication would damage a tenuous effort at negotiation with the Soviet Union. The United States has been urging the Soviet Union to use its influence to get North Vietnam to withdraw its 50,000 troops from Laos and return to the 1962 accords.

The Soviet Union, according to sources in the State Depart-

ment, has indicated to the United States that it would neither put pressure on the North Vietnamese nor escalate its support of North Vietnamese actions in Laos so long as the United States did not make a public issue of the conflict there.

Officials who have seen the transcript said that it gives a detailed account of American policy and action in Laos, including many facts not previously revealed to the Senate.

They said the release of the transcript would divulge the cost of American operations there, casualties suffered and the nature of intelligence activity. It might also prove embarrassing, they added, to the

Royal Laotian Government of Premier Souvanna Phouma.

Senator Albert Gore, Democrat of Tennessee, told the Senate this week that he had access to the transcript and that the "evidence is ample that the war in Laos and U.S. participation in the war in Laos has been secretly but greatly escalated."

Senator Gore, a member of the Foreign Relations committee, said that "we are engaging now in a civil war in Laos, and we have chosen sides just as we did earlier in Vietnam." He said that "what we are doing is getting more deeply involved in Laos while executing a gradual withdrawal from South Vietnam."